

Being a Frank Talk With "Maestro Mary" About Her Job

Bossing an Opera Company Is Hard Work, the Diva Admits, but All's Well While Stars Continue Telling Her Their Love Affairs—Up at 7:30, She Plunges Into Multitude of Tasks With Never Failing "Peptimism"



get to bed early, taboo the midnight dinners with wine.
"You're going to be some manager," I ventured.
"The best in the world if my company will work," replied the directress. "If they don't they can go elsewhere. My job depends on results. The only way to get results is to lay the law down and see that it is obeyed."

The Stars of the Company Are Heart and Soul With Mary

The Chicago Opera stars are all with "Our Mary" heart and soul in her new undertaking. Miss Cyrena Van Gordon said:

"Miss Garden will make good with a bang. She has the good wishes of every member of the company."
"Leave it to Mary. She'll make good," said Carmen Luevano, mezzo-soprano of the company. "She will be just as great as a director as she has been as an artist. This is a woman's age, and there is no good reason why Miss Garden should not be tremendously successful. Every member of the company is going to be back of her, and I feel sure that she will make the opera season here greater than ever before in its history."

Rosa Raisa said: "Miss Garden is a woman who can be trusted to succeed." She is a remarkable business woman, and under her direction the opera season next year is sure to be an even greater success than the present season."

Joseph Hsiop, Scotch tenor, shared the station of a fellow countryman over the appointment. Said he:

"General Haig was a Scotchman. He led the British to victory over the Germans. I do not see why a Scotch woman should not be successful as director of the Chicago Opera Company."

"I have no objections at all to working for a woman if she does not treat me rough. We have always been good friends and had no difficulties. I am highly pleased over the appointment and think that it should work out very well."

Charles Marshall, American tenor, who was given a tremendous ovation on the occasion of his initial appearance here, was equally enthusiastic.

"I am very much pleased with the appointment," said Mr. Marshall. "Miss Garden is bound to be a success. Women like her couldn't help but succeed in anything that they undertake. She is a woman of brains and broad minded enough to give every one a chance. I believe that under her French and Italian opera will have an equal chance here."

Amelita Galli-Curci telegraphed her congratulations from Minneapolis as follows: "I know you will win. Be sure and pick out a good business manager. Good luck and lots of love until I see you again."

Miss Garden announced that she would feature Charles Marshall, the American tenor, when the Chicago opera company plays its New York engagement, which starts next week. "I would like to take Mr. Marshall on tour to show what a wonderful American singer we have in him."

Mary Garden's career began in Chicago. She was born in Scotland, but came here with her parents when 8 years old. She started her musical education soon after she reached this country, taking lessons on the piano and violin. She took her first vocal lesson at the age of 15. After two years of private instruction in Chicago, during which time she appeared in the dual role of soprano soloist at the University Congregational Church on Sundays and the prima donna extraordinary of the South Side amateur opera company, she went to Paris to continue her studies. Three years of hope, despair and struggle followed. Three months before her expected debut as *Micholai* in "Carmen" her first unexpected chance came. The artist who was singing *Louise* in the opera of that name was suddenly taken ill during a performance. Mary Garden went on in the third act in a part she had studied alone and never had rehearsed. The next morning the "little girl from nowhere" was famous. The long struggle was over. Paris had proclaimed Mary Garden.

The Useful Lion

ACCORDING to some of the farmers of East Africa, the lion should be protected as a useful animal, notwithstanding the fact that once in a while he kills a man. The lion, they maintain, is a great destroyer of noxious herbivorous animals, such as zebras and antelopes, which are a scourge to the fields.

In one district, they say, no less than 346 lions were killed in one season by hunters, and they estimate that this represents the saving of 35,000 to 40,000 zebras and antelopes, which would otherwise have fallen a prey to the lions that were destroyed. Of course the hunters shoot zebras and antelopes also, but this fact, they think, does not counterbalance the destruction of those animals that would have been effected by the slain lions.

MARY GARDEN is at last to marry. She will try matrimony at 50. Question. How old is "Our Mary"? There need be no wild scrambling by men who consider themselves eligible for almanacs and biographical dictionaries to discover the secret of Mary's age because it would be a case of love's labor lost. The man of "Our Mary's" choice is neither a Chicago mounted policeman nor a Russian prince. He is an American, but his identity is a secret. Mary absolutely refuses to say who he is.

"He has promised to wait for me until I am 50," she said. "I will marry sooner than that, though."

"About when, may I ask?"

"After I put the Chicago Opera Company on a paying basis, which I think will be in 1922," replied Mary cautiously.

Miss Garden received exactly 142 proposals of marriage through the mail immediately following her appointment as director-general of the Chicago Opera Association. "See, they want me now, these trifling men, when they learn that I have landed a good job," said Mary.

GOSSIP and ordinary patter were to be left entirely out of our talk by mutual agreement in arranging for the interview which I enjoyed with Miss Mary Garden, the new general director of the Chicago Grand Opera Association.

"I want to find out just how you spend your day as a working woman," I suggested to "Our Mary."

"Well, don't you dare call me up on the phone making dates with me," caroled the diva. "You come over to-morrow—make it early and stay as long as you want."

I was on hand at 9 o'clock A. M. "Our Mary" was on the job one full hour before I arrived. Her desk was littered with mail. She was attired in a light fitting tailor made suit of brown. She looked the part of a real American business woman. She is the feminine type of a real "Go-Getter." Her heavy lidded eyes are brighter to-day than I have ever seen them. They are still *Salome's*. The red mouth still belongs to *Thais*. The smooth cheeks are smoother than they were when she electrified the two hemispheres in *Louise*.

Harder Work Than She Had Thought Is the Job of Impresario

"Say, this job of bossing an opera company is hard work," Miss Garden started. "Half-past seven o'clock every morning my beauty sleep is rudely interrupted by the harsh discords of a jangling alarm clock. Then I jump—yes, jump—into my clothes, take a skimpy breakfast—you know I only eat one real meal a day, and that is at night. I watch my weight like a professional pugilist."

"But why the dieting?" we inquired. "You're not a woman—and you're not getting into the 40 class!" she exclaimed.

"After breakfast, what?"

"Yes, what?" chorused "Our Mary."

"That's it, WHAT. Everything on the calendar from conferences, directions, telephone calls and a weeny little siesta."

"You don't mean to say that you find time to sleep on the job?"

"Every afternoon I sleep one hour," said Miss Garden, with a smile. "Whenever I am to sing at night I lie in bed all afternoon, and the day after it has been my custom to remain in bed for the greater portion of the day. That's how I keep myself in condition to sing. Furthermore, my sleeping itinerary is the foundation stone of my peptimism."

"I don't quite follow you on this peptimism stuff," I replied.

"Well, I'm not preaching health lectures to the world, but I respectfully solicit a careful inspection. I'm in the best of health, the bloom of youth is still on my cheeks—and it's the real stuff, nature's own—I eat like a horse at night, and I defy any woman in the world to-day to say that she has more 'pep' than Mary Garden."

"Reading the morning papers, I read them as carefully as any city editor. Yes, like real city editors, I read them twice and sometimes three times. Reading the daily papers is a fine art. I get inspiration from the day's news. It's refreshing. The mind is clear in the morning, and there is only one way to improve one's mind to my way of thinking, and that is to read the morning papers."

"After I have gone through the papers I read and open every bit of mail addressed to Mary Garden. The mail is divided into two piles. One pile represents personal attention correspondence. By that, I mean that I personally answer. The other is dele-

gated to either my secretary or one of my other assistants.
"Don't you find that opening your own mail and reading it takes up a lot of your time?"

"Yes, it does," said Miss Garden. "But I want to know just who is writing me letters and what they want to know. You can't beat first hand information."

"About how many messages have you received, letters, telegrams and cablegrams, wishing you success?"

Miss Garden's Idea of How To Keep the Average High

"Two bagful so far," replied Miss Garden. "And quite a few that were anything but—well, they wouldn't be classed as encomiums without stretching a point. After the mail, rehearsals. I have the good fortune of being able to sing fairly well, and when the occasion presents itself I just jump in and sing the part the way I think it should be sung. You know I have sung everything almost in grand opera, and not only that, I can tell when an artist is not singing it right."

"Supposing an artist wanders from the key during a regular performance, have you taken any precaution to guard against such a contingency?" was asked.

"Indeed I have. I'll let you in on a little secret," whispered the directress. "I shall attend the opera performances alone and incognito. Only one night a week will I put on the silks and diamonds and sit in a box. But I do not intend to spy on my artists. I want to get the impressions of the audience. That's my idea of making a go of my new job. Give the opera patrons what they want. The only way that I can get these impressions is to sit out in front with them. Some nights I will sit up in the gallery with the Italian barbers. The family circle will claim me one night, the main floor another and the boxes one night a week. When I am Mary Garden the artist. I shall do this because I want to make good. Everybody who has tried to educate the American operagoing public has either gone broke or crazy. It's just like running a newspaper, this business of running an opera company," said Miss Garden. "Find out what the people are thinking about and talking about and give it to them."

"We all know what the professor thinks of the bug, but none of us know what the bug thinks of the professor. Well, for centuries artistic directors of operas have been the professor; but this director, yours truly, intends to play the part of the bug—get me, the audience is the bug with me—and find out why it is that the Chicago Grand Opera Company needs an angel with a ton of money at the end of every opera season to wipe out a deficit that runs into a big fortune."

"It might be mentioned here that Mr. and Mrs. Harold F. McCormick have for several years personally guaranteed the expenses of the Chicago Grand Opera Association. Next year will be the last season that Mr. McCormick's guarantee will run. He announced recently that he would withdraw his offer at the conclusion of next season's opera."

"What will you do when Mr. McCormick withdraws his financial support from the company?"

"That means nothing to me," replied "Our Mary," "because by that time—1922—I shall have the Chicago Opera Association on a paying basis. Yes, making money for the directors."

"Do you intend to cut the salaries of the artists?"

Mary Garden, opera star, finds her work as manager of the Chicago Opera Company more exacting than she expected. Care of details, however, does not worry her, and she is going ahead with definite plans to put the organization on a paying basis. Photograph shows her in her Chicago office.

"No, I intend to raise the salaries of real artists," said Miss Garden. "I shall separate the false from the true. The day of fancy salaries for opera artists has passed. I shall do things in my new job. First I shall please my public; second, I shall make money for the company."

"The opera must be ruled with an iron hand," continued the directress. "That is the sort of a rule I intend to give it. I'm busy with organization now. The only place that the foreign element will be represented in my company will be on the stage. There will be only Americans connected with the business end of the company."

"You wouldn't say that foreigners were poor business executives?" I asked.

"I'll answer that question in my own way," answered Miss Garden. "The business head of an opera company comes in contact with the public continuously. He must be a big man. He must be a diplomat and, above all things, he must be able to talk American—you know what I mean—talk it well enough to get the money for the company. You don't find many successful American business men tripping over their artistic temperaments."

"I understand that you swung the axe on one of these temperamental chaps to-day?"

"Yes, and don't forget, I swung a wicked cleaver," said "Our Mary" with a laugh. "I replaced Romeo Francioli, the stage director, by appointing Jacques Coint in his stead. You know Mr. Coint was responsible for all the big Hammerstein productions. He was the father of 'Salome,' 'Thais' and 'Elektra.' They just adore Jacques in New York."

Continuing the Story of Miss Garden's Busy Days

"Following rehearsals I spend one hour with members of my company listening to their grievances," volunteered Miss Garden. "I must confess that 99 per cent. of them are fancied. But the remaining 10 per cent. are honest. Injun kids. Such mismanagement as the Chicago Opera Company has experienced during the past season has almost wrecked the company. I am gradually getting matters straightened."

"I must tell you also that I am getting along better than I thought I would in my new work."

"What's the sign?" I anxiously inquired. She whispered: "The artists are beginning to tell me about their troubles of the heart. Yes, yes, their love affairs; yes, three of them have told me everything about their sweethearts."

"I don't quite catch the significance," I hurried out.

"You're crazy," answered Miss Garden, with unmistakable evidence of peevishness. "Don't you see that I have their confidence? They're mine. They're working with me—not for me. When you get opera stars to unbuckle their 'tugs at the heart' they'll go to hell for you."

As she finished her explanation she brought her flat down on the table with the force of a Jack Dempsey upper cut. Right there and then I agreed that "Our Mary" was a natural born fighter.

"Did you ever tell your love affairs to any of your artistic directors?" ventured I. "Only one—and that was long ago," she

replied as she looked at me through narrowed lids.

"Take me on to the finish of the secret. Who was he?"

"It was Director Carre who discovered me," answered "Our Mary." A far away look came into the dusky blue eyes and for several moments she was silent. "That was when I was a girl—"

"Why, you don't consider yourself a grandmother?" I said.

"I am younger to-day than ever before," thundered Miss Garden. "One of the letters that I received only yesterday finished by saying that I had written my own death warrant when I signed the managerial contract for the Chicago company. It may come to pass, but not yet for awhile."

She Would Like to Be to America What Carre Was to France

I had an ample opportunity to study the directress while she was discussing her plans. It must be truthfully said that her fluffy golden hair has reached the middle age stage of its hennaed youth. Yes, I counted almost twenty distinct gray hairs. Although the light was good I was unable to detect a single wrinkle. The footprint of time have yet to make their appearance on "Our Mary's" perfect skin.

"Then it remained for a foreigner to discover our Mary Garden," I ventured. "That's the best thing foreigners do, discover opera stars and save women." Miss Garden replied with a smile.

"I don't quite get the connection of saving women," I replied.

"They save them for themselves; just a little joke," flashed back the directress. "Director Carre was a genius. He guided the destinies of the Opera Comique in Paris. He was a wonderful man. I want to be to America what he was to Europe. He did not teach me to act, mind you. Nobody taught me to do that. I knew that myself. I simply needed direction."

"The moment you really teach people to act, acting with them becomes artificial. There are no trained actors—you will find on a well regulated vaudeville bill an act that answers to the name of trained seals. For seven years I worked like a horse at the Comique. Then Oscar Hammerstein came to Paris and brought me to America. And then my troubles began."

"I had no troubles in Paris, because there I was accepted as the exponent of the modern school. In fact, I created it. In those days American opera patrons couldn't understand a woman who could give them a little singing and acting at the same time. But they understand now."

"I shall have all my artists attending nearly all the rehearsals," continued Miss Garden. "You can't learn too much these days. I will run the company like a ball club—plenty of morning exercises."

"How is it that nearly every American singer of note has been 'discovered' abroad by a foreigner?" I asked.

"Because Americans prefer the foreign trademark pinned on a singer," hotly replied Miss Garden.

"Will you try to revolutionize this 'discovering' fallacy custom?" said I. "That's my life work from now on," re-

plied Miss Garden. "Everybody in America with a voice will get a chance to sing in my company. I shall spend my own money to encourage the struggling American singers. I shall produce one, yes, two, American operas every year as long as I am at the head of the company."

"You are a real booster for 'Made in America' goods," I replied.

"We must have foreign operas to fill the seats," continued the diva-directress. "But if I can get one new opera a year from American composers it will only be a few years hence when we will lead the world in music. At the present time foreign operas are the meal tickets of every opera company."

"Fifty per cent. Italian, 35 per cent. French and 15 per cent. English will be my repertoire rating when I get under way next season. I intend to revive a few German operas later on."

"Now that we have the rehearsals out of the way how do you spend the rest of your day?"

"Then comes the real work," sighed Miss Garden. "I spend one hour or more with a representative of Mr. Harold McCormick, head of the directors of the Chicago Opera Company. All business details are gone into, such as new contracts, &c."

"There is considerable talk that Mme. Amelita Galli-Curci will sign a contract with the Metropolitan Opera Company."

Galli-Curci Has Promised the New Director to Remain

"Please deny that silly rumor," Miss Garden replied with emphasis. "Galli-Curci is with me in my new job in a thousand different ways. She wants to see me make good. She is going to help me, because some day she might want to tackle the same job herself. She's my friend."

"I understand that you are against your artists singing in New York or making contracts that call for appearances here and New York?"

"New York is the greatest opera city in America to-day," replied Miss Garden. "It is an asset to sing in New York. The New York public is my public. New Yorkers who attend the opera are an intelligent. Why I would sooner sing in New York than Paris any day." Mary clapped her jeweled hands together enthusiastically.

Continuing the diva-manageress said: "Let us finish this day with Mary Garden, the hard working business woman—where were we? Oh, yes, conferences with the box office representative. After that I go to my hotel, where I indulge in a cup of tea and my afternoon nap. Then I get up, read more mail, answer telephone calls by the dozen, dictate letters and make preparations for the only square meal I eat every twenty-four hours—my dinner. After dinner is out of the way my evening starts in. Yes, and I intend to watch over my young budding prima donna. Midnight life is the worst enemy these poor young creatures have to contend with. And, like Manager McGraw of the Giants once told me, a ball player has to be in bed by midnight if he is to play a good brand of ball the next day. Same thing with opera stars—particularly those who haven't arrived yet. They must